

# BATTALION HISTORY

On 18 January 1952, a Royal Australian Regiment Depot was raised as a training unit for special establishment on the Order of Battle. The Depot was later renamed 4RAR on 10 March 1952. This renaming was necessary because Government approval had been given to raise a Battalion and not a 'Depot'. The primary function of 4RAR at the time was to train and hold infantrymen for service in Korea. On 24 March 1960, the unit was incorporated into the School of Infantry as 'Depot Company The Royal Australian Regiment'. The two units comprised resulted in the formation of the Infantry Centre.

The political decision to raise a fourth battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment was made in 1963. Consequently, instructions for the raising of the Battalion were issued on 13 January 1964. The official raising of 4RAR on 1 February 1964, resulted in the first regular Battalion to be raised on Australian soil. Additionally, it was stated that this battalion is a new battalion, and not a resurrection of the old 4RAR.

Lieutenant Colonel D.S. Thomson, MC who carried out most of the detailed planning to raise the battalion, was appointed the first Commanding Officer from 1 February 1964 until 10 November 1966. He was affectionately known as the 'Father of the Fourth'. The first RSM WO1 L.E. 'Paddy' Brennan (1 February 1964 - 20 May 1966) was an inspiration to the Battalion in quickly establishing the necessary discipline required for the raising of a new unit. The first soldier posted to the new battalion was Staff Sergeant B.F. Price, as the Orderly Room Sergeant. He marched into Keswick Barracks, Headquarters Central Command, at Woodside on 25 October 1963. The other original members were selected personnel from the three existing battalions of the Regiment. The Pacific Islands Regiment provided some of the officers, subsequent reinforcements came through the Infantry Centre.

On 1 February 1964, the Inauguration Parade for 4RAR took place at Woodside Barracks, South Australia. Whilst addressing the Battalion the Commanding Officer Lieutenant Colonel D. S. Thomson, MC said, "Although we are a new battalion we inherit great traditions, forged for us by the older battalions of The Royal Australian Regiment, in the snows of Korea and the jungles of Malaya. We must live up to these traditions and help to make new ones". Subsequently, each year on 1 February, the Battalion celebrates the anniversary of its 'Inauguration' with a Ceremonial Parade and Sports Day. Additionally, at around this time the Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel D.S. Thomson, MC decided to change the Battalion colour from its original khaki to scarlet, which it is today.

The next 18 months of training were conducted at Woodside in preparation for the relief of 3RAR in Malaysia. Confrontation with Indonesia added greater incentive to training all elements of the Battalion up to a high degree of combat readiness. Concurrently, two other very significant events took place. Firstly, on 1 April 1965, the Governor-General, Viscount De L'Isle, VC, PC, GCMG, GCVO, KStJ presented the Queen's and Regimental Colours to the Battalion. Afterward, the Governor-General suggested that to mark his visit the Assault Pioneers should wear beards, as was the custom in his own regiment, the Grenadier Guards. Subsequently, the 4RAR Assault Pioneer Platoon Sergeant became the only soldier permitted to wear a beard in the Australian Army. The second significant occurrence was shortly afterwards when Her Majesty the Queen approved an alliance between the Irish Guards and 4RAR.